

Events

MONDAY, MARCH 10

- The AUS sponsors an SSMU all-candidates debate. Reception to follow. Leacock 232, 13h.
- Hillel Jewish Student Centre continues its lunchtime lecture series with professor Gershon Hundert on "The Spanish Inquisition. The fate of the Sephardic Jew." Hillel House, 3460 Stanley St, 13h30-14h30, free admission. Info 845-9171.

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

- The McGill Department of History presents Dr. Yitzhak Kerem of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem speaking on "Greek Jewry in the Holocaust." Thomson House, Blue Boardroom, 3rd Floor, 16h.
- Peer Health Education, as part of McGill pride week, offers a lesbian and gay men's health workshop. Women's workshop at 18h, men's workshop at 17h. Shatner, room 107/108.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

- Agapaix presents "Voici L'Homme," a theatrical presentation

of the life of Jesus. Saint Rita's Parish, 655 Sauriol, 19h. Admission: \$10. Info: 384-2100 or 382-9788.

- The McGill Marxist-Leninist study group hosts "The last budget and the hidden agenda of the Liberals." Shatner, room 425-26, 19h.
- McGill Student Health Services presents its annual nutrition day. Leacock 232, 10h-15h. Info: 398-2915.

- The SIAMSA School of Irish Music presents Irish playwright Anne Devlin as part of the Concordia Irish Studies Lecture Series. Concordia University Hall Building, 1455 de Maisonneuve West, room 507, 20h30.

Info: 487-1216.

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

- Sexual Assault & Queer Relationships workshop addressing sexual assault and violence in same-sex relationships. Shatner, room. 107/108, 18h30.

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

- The Committee for Human Rights and Democracy in Nigeria presents Wole Soyinka, Nigerian writer and Nobel Laureate, on the political situation in Nigeria. The talk will be translated into French. Leacock, room 132, 19h30. Voluntary contribution requested.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15

- The South Asian Women's Community Centre celebrates International Women's Day with an evening of theatre, songs, dances poems and stories. Centre Lajeunesse, 7378 rue Lajeunesse (métro Jean Talon), 19h. Info: 528-8812.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

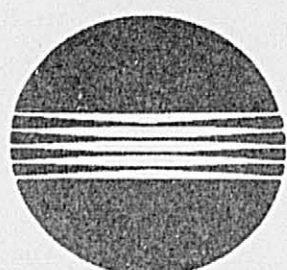
- The Caravane d'amitié Québec-Cuba invites all opposed to the economic blockade and the Helms-Burton legislation to participate in the annual fundraising dinner in solidarity with Cuba. Buffet Anna Maria, 357 Bellechasse, 12h30. Admission: \$20.

ONGOING

- McGill's Savoy Society presents *The Pirates of Penzance* from March 13-15 and 19-21. Moyse Hall, 20h. Tickets are \$12 regular and \$8 for seniors, students. Info: 398-6826.
- The Montreal Sexual Assault Centre seeks bilingual women volunteers to work on their telephone crisis line. Info: 934-4504 or 934-0505, ext. 452.
- Informal peer-facilitated post abortion support group. No counselors present. Time to be arranged based on interest. Info: Terri at the McGill Women's Union, 398-6823.
- The McGill University Photographic Society is holding "Photo Contest 97." Deadline for submissions: March 15. Info: 398-6786 or visit Shatner B-06.
- McGill Pride Week runs until Friday, March 14.
- PROCEID seeks volunteers who are interested in working with individuals with an intellectual disability. Info: 737-7973.

Clinical Research Institute of Montreal

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Table of Contents

Page 4

Catch 22
Aboriginal women struggle to assert themselves

Page 5

Shelter from the storm
Stella corrects misconceptions about sex work

Page 6

Spouting the same old shit
Faux feminists think they're changing the world
Welcome to the Bitch Space
Women rant all they want

Absolutely fabulous web sights for women

Page 7

Something fierce
Guerilla girls turn art upside down

Page 8-9

Sisterhood at last?
Has the women's movement really embraced difference?

Page 10

Pamper your pussy
Alternative menstrual products

Page 11

Hit from all sides
Women bear the brunt of government cutbacks

Page 12

Will it ever be extinct?
Rethinking sexism in the classroom

Page 13

Back to basics: men cavort naked in the forest
Scared & 'underprivileged' men wax stupid

Page 14

A street of one's own
Herstreet around the clock
More Bitch Space
Rants from our readers

Bitching Back

Why is it that women's issues are 'special issues' when we comprise over one half of the world's population? The plight of women on this planet is still rife with complications and oppressions and we must not be placated into silence by the small gains that we have achieved. We believe that rage equals power — power that we have long been denied.

us if a women's issue is really necessary or have expressed their offense at our reclamation of the term "bitch", we respond, and we mean to address both contentions; we still have a lot to bitch about. We hope that this issue, The Q's Empowerment Issue will provide a strong and emphatic response.

For women, in Canada, in North

America, and the world over, there still remains a myriad of problems and oppressions for us to bitch about. These oppressions are too vast to be summed up in a small space, and too deeply entrenched in our consciousness and cultural psyches to be either easily combated or even identified. The devaluation of women in society has long existed for the sole purpose of empowering the opposite sex. It is our responsibility as autonomous women to recognize these constraining and carefully constructed myths as such. It is also our responsibility to recognize our right to live our

I, the undersigned, take issue with the December 20th, 1996 conviction decision in the Pamela George murder trial in the court of Queen's Bench, Regina, Saskatchewan and call for an appeal of the lesser charge of manslaughter in the conviction of Alex Ternowetsky and Stephen Kummerfeldt.

I, the undersigned, further take issue with the comments of the Honourable Justice Ted Malone and call for immediate action in his removal from the Queen's Bench. In this case, Judge Malone, instructed the jury to bear in mind that Pamela George was a prostitute and that the defendants had reduced mental capacity because of drunkenness. Judge Malone holds responsibility to oversee due process whereby employment history and sexual history are irrelevant in law and whereby death resulting from sexual assault and forcible confinement may hold a conviction of first degree murder.

Judge Malone's efforts to afford the defendants more than their due rights have trivialized the life, death, and memory of a young woman and disrespected her children, family, community and all Canadian sex workers. Judge Malone's comments as expressed in the instructions to the jury interfere with and detract from the judicial responsibility of securing a verdict based on law, and are therefore irresponsible and unacceptable.

I encourage the Honourable Minister of Justice John Nilson to note that Canadian citizens are not unmindful that the legal system and those who hold positions of power within the legal system are responsible to all citizens. The implications of the lesser verdict of manslaughter in this case are far beyond conveying a simple, insidious message that women of the First Nations, particularly sex workers of the First Nations, are disposable. Indeed, should this verdict remain unchallenged, that message becomes cast in legal precedent. I call for this to be addressed immediately in a manner that is responsible - AN APPEAL OF THE LESSER CHARGE OF MANSLAUGHTER AND THE REMOVAL OF THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE TED MALONE FROM QUEEN'S BENCH.

Name (please print):
Address:

Signature:

Please mail completed petition to: INA GEORGE and PETER SANGWAIS
c/o 1136 Athol Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4T 3C2

or FAX to (306) 525-9579

In some courtrooms of the world, women are not even permitted to give testimony. Their voices are silenced and their subjectivity is eradicated. In a Canadian courtroom, on December 20 of last year, the life and memory of a woman named Pamela George was devalued in an unimaginably repugnant manner. Because she was aboriginal, a woman and a sex worker, the 'Honourable' Justice Ted Malone requested that the jury bear in mind Pamela's profession. When the verdict came down, the two young, white men who viciously raped and murdered her were found guilty of the lesser charge of manslaughter which carries a sentence of five to 10 years. They will be eligible for parole in two years.

For this we express our outrage and invite you to do the same. (Please see petition on this page).

So to those people who have asked

lives in exactly the ways we see fit. If impassers render this impossible, if we feel unsafe walking on the streets, if we feel ignored in our classes, that we can't excel in our careers, that we can't feed our families, that we can't fuck who we want how we want, or worse if we're put in situations where we are forced to fuck someone we don't want, it is imperative that we fight back together.

As women, we are individuals, we all come from different backgrounds, cultures and ideologies, but we have the responsibility to support one another and endeavour to understand our differences.

Get out. Come out. Get Angry. Get Bitchy. Use your voice.

Enjoy the issue.

The Proud Bitches,
— Meredith Cohen, Andrea Mason, Netami Stuart & Sonia Verma

The McGill Daily

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All members of the University's administrative and support staff involved in the support of graduate studies and research are eligible. It is suggested that nominated individuals have served a minimum of two years.

A selection committee consisting of academic, administrative and support staff will take into account such criteria as: dedication to one's unit, in the service of graduate studies and research, in a way that contributes to the University community; service beyond the call of duty; motivation of self and others; initiative; and significant achievement.

Any McGill staff member - academic, administrative or support - or graduate student may support a nomination. The letter of support should profile the nominee's contributions to graduate studies and research in the unit and in the University as a whole. A curriculum vitae is strongly recommended, and additional support letters (maximum six) will also be taken into consideration. A minimum of two signatures is suggested, and a broad base of support is encouraged.

To obtain a nomination form or more information, please contact the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, Room 308, Dawson Hall (phone: 3991, fax: 8257).

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATION: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 1997.

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MAINTAINING THE FIRE

*Aboriginal women call for their rights
and self-government*

by Anup Grewal

In his book, *The Seventh Fire*, Dan Smith writes: "self-government is not the pursuit of Native rights in the courts or in big city hotel meeting rooms by politicians, lawyers, consultants, academics and assistant deputy ministers... The real struggle for aboriginal self-government is both much smaller and larger than those things."

Smith's words ring true for a significant number of people in aboriginal communities across Canada — namely aboriginal women.

For some aboriginal women, seeing the negotiation of self-government between institutions that have oppressed their peoples for centuries and the aboriginal power structures which grew up out of those very institutions, seems potentially dangerous for their rights.

Ossennontion, a Mohawk woman from Khanawake, writes: "When the feds talk of recognizing self-government, they mean delegating authority to 'Indians'... Because so many of our people don't know our ways, they have become involved in processes whereby they have attempted to gain recognition of our 'right to self-government' instead of working on finding ways to effectively assert and exercise our own governments."

Aboriginal women have often taken a leading role outside of politics in their own communities. Seeing their communities broken by depression, unemployment, spousal violence, child abuse and alcoholism, it is aboriginal women who have risen to combat these difficulties. They have established community healing programs, health centres, family violence and substance abuse counselling.

Although it has often been an uphill battle trying to get funding from governments and even from their own band councils to maintain these programs, aboriginal women have made headway in reasserting pride and dignity in the people of their communities.

Skonaganleh:rá, a Tyendinaga woman who is also part of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, writes about the strength of aboriginal women. Mohawk women, she says, traditionally had the role as the 'centre,' responsible for maintaining the fire, which is at the heart of Mohawk beliefs. She goes on to write that even as aboriginal women saw their homes and communities divided, they have remained strong: "Our

women are still the poorest, still have the poorest health and still have the shortest life expectancy period. In those contexts, I don't know how many more ways you can divide her house and she'll continue to maintain that fire — but she will!"

The dilemma for aboriginal women in the concept of self-government is that no one, least of all they, wants to turn the

clock back in order to have their rights recognized. What they are calling for is the recognition of their participation in the current realities of aboriginal peoples.

This idea has led to many contradictory and difficult assertions by aboriginal women in recent years. In

June 1992, Algonquin women and children at Grand Lac in Québec stood up against the forces of secrecy and cover-ups to march to the local police station and report their male family members' violence and sexual abuse.

One of the most controversial demands made by women has been to seek assurance from their leaders for the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any self-government.

Women have been attacked for wanting to save parts of a system of rule that has oppressed aboriginal peoples. It is difficult for women to reconcile this reality with their need to assert their voices

*A Nation is not conquered
until the hearts of its women
are on the ground.*

and rights. For example, in 1991, women's groups in Manitoba claimed that "Indian self-government would be a life sentence of abuse for many women and children."

Statements like this may be harsh, and critics may see aboriginal women (ironically) as slowing down the process towards self-government, but these calls need to be taken into consideration for any true self-government to occur.

As Dan Smith writes of the healing circles initiated by aboriginal women all over the country, "someday, Native historians may very well point to the growth of the healing circles and the genuine change they represent, rather than the constitution or any other aspect of the established Indian industry, as the real spark that led to aboriginal self-government."



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The Panel Members:

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Faculty of Nursing, Université de Montréal & Academic Co-director, Center of Excellence for Women's Health, Consortium Université de Montréal

On their own terms

Stella provides a safe space for sex workers

by Andrea Mason

In a society which systematically stigmatizes sex work as dirty and immoral, Stella, a group run by and for sex workers in Montréal, is working to combat this stereotype and provide much needed support for women sex workers in the city.

Stella originated in 1993 as a public health research project to study sex workers in downtown Montréal and what makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from HIV. The project found that sex workers were in fact already consistently using condoms.

"The women involved have an investment in staying healthy," explained Stella coordinator Karen Herland, the speaker at McGill's "Feminism and Sex Work" discussion on March 4. The problem, Herland continued, lies in sex workers' "distress over not knowing about health services or being denied access to them."

In recognition of this need for support and services, Stella opened as a permanent safe space for women in May 1995, offering a drop-in centre, support services and referrals. It provides a place for sex workers to "get away from stigmas and judgments, share information, recognize and validate their experience and expertise," described Herland.

It is a tendency of legislators, women's groups, the judicial system and police, who have historically dealt with issues surrounding sex workers, to look at the sex worker's situation from the outside. In contrast, asserted Herland, Stella is about "sex workers determining their own agenda and setting their own terms."

Societal attitudes toward sex work effectively exclude women sex workers from the health care system and other social services taken for granted by the general public. Herland explained that if a doctor finds out that a woman is a sex worker, the fate of her children or the security of her citizenship may be endangered. Furthermore, sex workers' health problems may be dismissed because of a general attitude that in 'their line of work', they 'get what they deserve'.

Sex workers are also vulnerable to police harassment, but they have a lack of viable legal recourse. Although prostitution is not technically illegal, such activities as soliciting or negotiating the exchange of sex for money are against the law. Because soliciting is so difficult to prove, police usually opt to charge street workers with jaywalking or loitering.

"Two \$130 fines in a week add up, [and] it's difficult to make back the

that they can't have control over their own lives, that they are poor little things that can't take care of themselves," maintains one sex worker who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Addressing this and other stereotypes, Herland described the diversity of women involved in sex work. "There are different entry and exit points into the system, different reasons for what led women there and why," she explained.

For some, she said, it is a means of making fast money. Others find the work exciting and pleasurable. In some cases, it is a ticket out of impoverished circumstances or the best of a set of difficult alternatives. But she stressed that sex work is basically work for money, not so different from any other job that allows a person to pay the rent.

Herland stressed the need to "forget the legal and moral, and think of what sex workers need in

terms of work, occupational safety and health."

Although Herland would like sex work to be dealt with strictly in the context of labour codes and health and safety standards, she recognizes the need to work within the existing legal framework for now. "It would take a lifetime of work to change the laws," she said ruefully.

Instead, Herland would like to see the laws applied differently. For example, she advocates that the judicial system turn a blind eye to a woman's personal history of sex work in exchange for her testimony against a rapist.

Stella presently runs a program called Bad Trick, which provides women with the opportunity to anonymously report a robbery, beating or sexual assault. The reports are then distributed to 15 community groups across the city so that other sex workers will be informed and better equipped to protect themselves.

Stella also provides forms for women to complete if they have been harassed by the police. Stella will take the reports to the police and address the complaints without involving the women themselves.

Herland criticized the restrictive laws surrounding sex work. "It's about controlling women's sexuality and what it should be, especially in a public place," she asserted.

"There is a societal [perception] that women have to be protected,

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•MCGILL DAILY•
SPECIAL ISSUE
MARCH 10, 1997

Sure I'm A Feminist, But...

Faux feminists exposed

by Sonia Verma

If you fall for it, faux feminists embody a savvy new wave of feminism.

Their message is an alarmingly potent blend of positivity mixed with back-patting: The battle is over, they assure us, and women should quit complaining and play nice with the boys.

Sure these women are self-declared feminists, but no sooner do they claim to represent the vanguard of the movement, than they argue it's time to sit down, shut up and back off from actively pursuing an 'agenda' of women's rights.

The criticisms voiced against faux feminists' dismissal of domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape, is merely used to fuel their rhetoric. They accuse the 'mainstream feminist movement' of stifling dissent and choking debate.

But the fact is, when faux feminists step up to bat in the name of the cause they only wag their fingers at feminism for going too far.

And their claims range from the offensive to the absurd.

FEMINISM UP FOR OWNERSHIP

Christina Hoff Sommers, in her book *Who Stole Feminism?* takes on what she characterizes as a wealthy and powerful "feminist establishment" who capitalize on their "victimhood" and reap lucrative rewards. "The feminists are the ones getting most of the money, the professorships, and the well-paid jobs inside the burgeoning new victim/bias industry," she writes.

Patriarchy is a myth, according to Sommers. Moreover, those sneaky, old-school feminists have used it as a clever marketing trick to cash in on their victimhood. "It is now virtually impossible to be appointed to high administrative office in any university system without having passed muster with the gender feminists."

Maybe I blinked and missed Sommers' feminist revolution, but if McGill is any indication of women's representation among university faculty, the glass ceiling has hardly been shattered. Currently, women account for a paltry 10.9 per-cent of full professorships and the number of departments where women faculty outnumber men is holding steady at zero.

The feminist elite have brainwashed the masses to "be alarmed, angry, and resentful of men" and to "fabricate atrocities" writes Sommers.

But last time I took the pulse of patriarchy, it seemed to be doing just fine. Women are currently paid 72 per-cent of a man's wages for identical work — a gap which is widening thanks to the slashing of pay equity programs in provinces such as Ontario. While women have made headway in fields such as law and medicine in terms of representation, outside these professional classes, inequalities in pay, benefits and representation remain. According to a recent UN study, at the rate it's going, it will take 475 years for women of industrialized countries to catch up with their male counterparts in senior managerial positions. Politically, women hold only 13 per-cent of seats in the United States Senate, the country from which Sommers draws her analysis.

And feminist organizations, far from wallowing in funding, have become increasingly cash-strapped trying to provide services to compensate for cutbacks to social programs, affordable housing and healthcare.

DANGEROUS DENIAL

Another wise faux feminist, Kate Roiphe, the author of *The Morning After: Sex, Fear and Feminism*, argues that feminists have blown the phenomenon of date rape out of proportion.

Numerous studies and research generated by both feminist and non-partisan organizations have found that between 1 in 4 and 1 in 12 women will experience rape, or attempted rape in their lifetimes. In fact according to the National Victims' Centre, 1.3 women are raped every minute in the United States.

Roiphe maintains that numbers have been inflated by those nasty feminists. "If I were really standing in the middle of an epidemic, a crisis, if 25 per-cent of my female friends were really being raped, wouldn't I know it?" she asks.

Apparently not. And it might have something to do with the fact that Roiphe, like most of her white, mid-

dle-class, university-educated counterparts have had limited contact with the diversity of women consulted in any type of research concerning rape.

Truth be told, Roiphe had never even spoken to a rape survivor, which is hardly surprising since her dismissal of rape is based on little more than personal experience. In fact, Roiphe seems to be guilty of the "cashing in," that Sommers purports to be the weakness of the "feminist establishment" — or rather, the 'faux feminists'.

Other faux feminists like Camille Paglia in *Sexual Persona*, retreat to strictly essentialist arguments when discussing the feminine "nature". Paglia reinforces gender stereotypes by depicting women as innately passive and less resourceful than men. "We could make an epic catalogue of male achievements... If civilization had been left in female hands, we would still be living in grass huts" Paglia writes.

With friends like Camille...

FRIENDS OR FOES

The arguments of faux feminists hinge on a warped and shallow representation of feminism which glosses over the complexities within the movement. Contradictions which, many women argue, has given it strength. In *The New Victorians: A Young Woman's Challenge to the Old Feminist Order*, for example, Rene Denfeld dismisses divergences within feminism. She writes, "Women...are often told that to be a proper feminist one must convert to goddess religion and practice modern witchcraft." Later, Denfeld trivializes debate surrounding feminist theory, contending that "Feminist theory on patriarchy is often little more than a shallow justification for feminists to condemn those aspects of society they dislike."

Denfeld first reduces feminism to ridiculous proportions because then, it becomes easier to dismiss. Faux feminists falsely imbue feminism with precisely the qualities that they criticize - simplicity and inaccessibility. These women construct a feminism that is easy to attack.

Faux feminists attack the women's movement on the grounds that it isn't diverse. Even if that were true, the staunchly conservative vision of feminism that they regurgitate is equally

formulaic.

These women spend less time fighting for women's rights, devoting more time to attending conferences which are little more than neo-con schmooze fests where "average woman" after "average woman" speak to roomfuls of mostly men insisting that feminism has gone too far.

The mainstream media has greedily gobbled up their rhetoric, eager to put a fresh spin on what it has stubbornly and consistently tried to label a dying movement. Faux feminists have become media darlings who permit the novelty of creating a "feminist vs. feminist" debate.

Unfortunately empowerment hardly makes it onto the 'agenda' because faux feminists deny the necessity for discussion. Their ideology is empty and succeeds in little other than gaining them the media spotlight — leaving women's rights in the dark.



The way men talk

The way men talk about the women they fuck rating their bodies, judging their cunts

I hear them with one ear and siphon their shit no more than a body with anonymous tits.

Lying encounters of numbers and size they wear cowboy boots, plaid, they're 25

From my generation I'm remote and repulsed but I stick to my seat afraid to speak out.

— Elaine O'Connor

Net Activism

by Derek Fung

1. The American Association of University Women (www.aauw.org) is a national organization that promotes education and equity for all women and girls.

2. Canadian Women's Internet Association (www.women.ca) has extensive resource on violence, women's health, spirituality, sexuality, advocacy and more. This week, the association is sponsoring an internet candlelight vigil (www.women.ca/violence/candle.html) in remembrance of the women killed on December 6.

3. The Feminist Page (www.missouri.edu/~c617756/Fem.html) a site with discussions about various issues and links.

4. NotVictims (www.unc.edu/~juliette/notvictims.html) a resource site for such topics as sexual abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, and more.

5. The Survivor's Page (cam043212.student.utwente.nl) is dedicated to all survivors of sexual abuse and rape. Includes stories from survivors and way to get in touch with our survivors and their friends and families.

6. Distinguished Women of Past and Present (www.netsrq.com/~dhois) is a page with the biographies of women who contributed to our culture in many different ways.

7. Catt's Claws (www.city-net.com/~lmann/women/iis/cattsclaws.html) a feminist net newsletter.

8. Guerrilla Girls (www.voyagerco.com/gg/gg.html) are a group of women artists and arts professionals who make posters about discrimination.

9. Feminist Majority Foundation (www.feminist.org) a huge web site with links to feminist groups, news, and activism.

10. Tactical Media Crew (vivaldii.nexus.it/commerce/tmcrew/enhome.htm) a group of guerilla-media feminist. Most of the site is in Italian though.



Q's empowerment

Join the Guerrilla Girls today

Turning the art world on its head

by Jessica Howard

Do you know who the Guerrilla Girls are? Don't worry, no one does.

Wearing gorilla masks to conceal their identities, these art-world feminists use guerrilla tactics to undermine sexism and discrimination in the arts and in society in general.

The group was born in 1985 when the Museum of Modern Art in New York held an exhibition entitled "An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture", featuring only 13 female artists out of a total of 169. Through research, the nascent group found concrete evidence of sexist and racist discrimination on the part of art dealers, curators, collectors and publishers.

In order to publicly embarrass the culprits, the Guerrilla Girls posted their findings in areas like SoHo.

Dubbing themselves "the conscience of the art world", the Guerrilla Girls went on confronting the art establishment with its own shortcomings. Presenting their bold statements with humour, the group has the potential to engage rather than alienate its targets.

"It felt so good to ridicule and belittle a system that excluded us. There was also that stale idea that feminists don't have a sense of humour," says one of the Guerrilla Girls, in their book *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*.

MEDIA FOR CHANGE

The Guerrilla Girls have used almost every form of media to make their message heard. They publish a newsletter, entitled *Hot Flashes*, funded by the National Endowment of the Arts. In its first issue, the Guerrilla Girls wrote an exposé of the New York Times' cultural coverage, pronouncing it "Too male, too pale, too stale and too Yale." They also use their book, billboards, and their website to disseminate their message, winning them accolades from many feminist organizations, as well as press and television coverage all over the world.

According to writer Whitney Chadwick, the efficiency of their tactics centres on the fact that "they package cultural injustice as numerical epitaph. It's usually men who collect statistics, and the Girls are doing similar math in the world of art."

The Guerrilla Girls' activism has not only drawn attention to issues of sexism and discrimination, but helped bring about concrete

change. According to Guerrilla Girl 'Alice Neel', one of their most successful efforts was a demonstration held at the opening of the SoHo branch of the Guggenheim Museum in 1992. In co-operation with the Women's Action Coa-

lition, public event and many have adopted the names of dead female artists as pseudonyms. Not only do the masks give the Guerrilla Girls a fierce group image, but they conceal the members' identities.

"Being anonymous is very important because we want the focus to be on the issues, not on who we are, because a lot of us are well known. By being anonymous, our egos are left behind and the issues are what's important," says Guerrilla Girl 'Alice Neel'.

While they have progressed toward their goals, the Guerrilla Girls continue to encounter criticism and resistance. "The Guerrilla Girls is about an excuse for failure. If women allow themselves to make excuses for their regrets, for what they don't have in their lives, then the women's movement becomes nothing but an excuse for mediocrity," says art dealer Mary Boone.

Yet their fan mail exceeds their hate mail. According to the web 'zine Suck, "The exciting potential of guerrilla publishing is in being able to confront precisely those most likely to ignore and avoid you if given the opportunity."

In addition, much fan mail, particularly from women, asks how to join the Guerrilla Girls.

Although joining them is impossible, the Guerrilla Girls share a secret with those who inquire.

"We're no geniuses. Feel free to steal ideas from us or any other group. Investigate how women and people of colour are discriminated against in your city, your museum, your school, your workplace, your family, your bedroom. Finger and humiliate those responsible."

Visit Guerrilla Girls at: <http://www.voyagerco.com:80/gg/gg.html>



lition, the Guerrilla Girls distributed paper bags bearing the words, "What's new at the Guggenheim Museum? The same old isms: racism, classism and sexism."

"Ultimately they [the Guggenheim] did change the show... but they were really upset and nervous about the demonstration, which was interesting to us. We saw that we can make a difference," commented Neel.

ANONYMOUS IMPACT

Other activist groups such as the Women's Action Coalition, Act Up and the Barbie Liberation Front have been inspired to use strategies similar to the Guerrilla Girls.

In spite of all their impact during the last 10 years, the Guerrilla Girl members have managed to maintain their anonymity. They wear their trademark gorilla masks for every



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Monday, March 10, 1997 The McGill Daily

by Samana Siddiqui

The po

Has the women's movement really embraced diversity?

movement welcomed these women on the condition that they accept a specific definition of women's liberation, namely, a mainstream North American one?

Judy Rebick, now co-host of CBC's *Face Off*, is a former president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), the country's largest umbrella organization of Canadian women's groups. She believes that the inclusion of women of colour into the feminist movement has begun, citing the election of women of colour to NAC's leadership positions. Last summer, Sunera Thobani, who is of Indian origin, stepped down as head of NAC and Joan Grant-Cummings, who is originally from the Caribbean, was elected president of the organization.

As well, Rebick says the movement has always been open to different visions of feminism, giving liberal and radical feminism as examples of the movement's openness. For her, the definition of a feminist is "anyone who fights for women's equality," even if they have a different definition of feminism.

But Shree Mulay, director of McGill University's Centre for Research and Teaching on Women sees Thobani and Grant-Cummings ascension to power as only "symbolic".

"I think there is a genuine effort to integrate women of colour (into the movement), but it really has not happened at the func-

tional level," she says.

McGill political science and economics student Soraya Hassanali,

were supposed to be. And I don't think they were able to deal with that because we were saying that our faith is very fundamental to who we are. No matter what we're discussing, we are discussing it because we believe in a certain way of life."

"If women at that level cannot accept us, in terms of who we are, then it's not talking very well about women of the world today," Haffajee continues. "We need to understand that we need to be accepted for who we are, we do not necessarily have to be like their definition or become like them. Because they are who they are and we are who we are. And we have as much right to be who we are."

DEFINING THE MOVEMENT

Haffajee's negative experience at the UN conference poses a question many people thought the feminist movement had already answered: Has the feminist movement, here in Canada and worldwide, progressed from being solely a "white, upper class woman's movement" to one that is more

Judging from her work, most people would consider Khadija Haffajee an activist for women's rights. The Ottawa native has spent the last 25 years establishing and working with Muslim women's groups across North America, and speaking out about issues concerning Muslim women.

But Haffajee, along with 60 Muslim women from about 12 different countries who were part of the Muslim women's non-governmental organization at the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on

"We found in some workshops people would get up and say things like, 'what are all these fundamentalist women doing', 'Why are they running around in scarves', 'Religion was not on this agenda,'" says Haffajee.

"Number one, they were, I think surprised that we would even attend a conference," she continues. "And number two, that we could articulate

"We found in some workshops people would get up and say things like, 'what are all these fundamentalist women doing', 'Why are they running around in scarves', 'Religion was not on this agenda.'"
— Khadija Haffajee, delegate at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.

Women in Beijing did not experience the "sisterhood" the woman's movement often talks about. Instead, Haffajee said she and her delegation encountered hostility from many women at the conference.

even though we were covered. Because we were not fitting their particular stereotypical image of who we

inclusive of women of different backgrounds, commonly referred to as "women of colour"? And if so, has the



who was a youth delegate representing the Students' Society of McGill University at the



empowerment



•MCGILL DAILY•
SPECIAL ISSUE
MARCH 10, 1997

Politics of difference

Beijing conference, agrees. She says Thobani and Grant-Cummings are only "changing the colour of the institution [NAC]." Although this signals a start, she is wary of "the potential to mistake token representation for equality."

Mulay says an element of racism in the movement has always been present, and that "at the gut-level it hasn't really been solved."

The problem of racism and an exclusively "white, upper class" vision of feminism is a legacy of the movement's early days, according to Hassanali.

"A fundamental flaw of the women's movement since its inception has been the view by its vocal proponents, traditionally white Western women who have disseminated the vision of the movement, that women of the world are a homogenous group with the same values," she

This narrow perception has effectively shut out the experiences of women of colour, and other women.

Haffajee cites a case where her concerns as a non-white woman were glossed over by some women at the conference. Haffajee attended workshops presented by women who were not Muslim on Muslim women's issues. In addition, Muslim women in the audience were not given the opportunity to respond. "They were talking about us but we were not allowed to present and counterbalance what they were saying," she says.

Mulay points out that the vision of all women as homogenous has led to a lack of understanding of the needs of women of colour.

"(There are) clear differences between women in the South and women in the North with respect to what is

important in their struggle to achieving equality," she says.

HIERARCHY OF OPPRESSION

According to Mulay, part of the problem is that the feminist movement has placed more of an emphasis on sexism as a system of oppression, ignoring the role racism and classism also play in oppression and disempowerment. But Mulay levels the same criticism towards women of colour who use the sole variable of race to evaluate oppression.

"What is true for the larger movement is true for women of colour as well," she explains. "The issue of identity politics has to be identified as well with women of colour."

Nathalie Léveillé is co-ordinator of Concordia University's women's centre. She agrees with Mulay's criticism that the feminist movement tends to focus primarily on oppression through sexism, instead of taking into account other 'isms' as well.

"I think sexism is a given but I think we need to hear more of the issues of racism and classism," she says. "Perhaps we've internalized the oppression as women from society. We've internalized that oppression from men but also from women."

"As feminists, we like to think that we have accepted women from diverse cultures and diverse ethnic backgrounds, but from my own reality working in a university women's centre, I see that is not the case," she points out, adding that most women who visit the centre are white, anglophone and able-bodied.

Léveillé also thinks the move-

ment's openness to differences is selective.

"We are more tolerant of women with different definitions of feminism but we haven't accepted each other as well on an external level," she says. "We have our own internalized racism almost."

"We're more willing to listen to religious differences than I think to really talk about racism up front and in an open venue"

For Hassanali, though, differences of opinion are no different than differences in visions of feminism and liberation.

"The movement is still struggling to incorporate alternative voices," she says. "The feminist movement has been able to create theoretical models that present alternative structures so that radical feminism or structural feminist positions are understood in relation to liberal feminists, for example. But just because the models are known does not mean the repre-

sentation is necessarily forthcoming."

She adds that as a youth delegate at the Beijing conference, she herself noticed a lack of tolerance at times

"The youth movement, we too met with hostility," she says. "Our positions weren't respected."

BRIDGING UNDERSTANDING

But Hassanali does not paint an entirely bleak picture.

"There was, to a great extent solidarity," says Hassanali of the Beijing conference. "However, there was dissension and conflicting ideas or perspectives, but that's the beauty of the whole process."

She adds that the next wave of feminism may be more inclusive.

"Perhaps the third wave is going to be less of a feminist movement and more of a humanist movement without the hierarchical structure and

more globally and collectively organized.

"Change is happening and I don't think there is cause to be completely negative because the movement is dynamic and it's not static whatsoever, and as long as people are willing to listen and to allow change to happen, women of colour, alternative voices will soon be more than tokens in the movement," she continues.

Haffajee agrees that the role of dialogue is crucial in this.

"If we as women of the world, are going to build bridges then we need to understand where each one of us is coming from," she says. "If you don't allow people to give their viewpoint, there's no dialogue. It's an imposition of some other ideas. And we should be aiming for dialogue because with dialogue comes understanding. Otherwise we're going to be poles apart and we build walls instead of bridges. And we need to work on that, Inshaa'Allah (God willing)."

"The feminist movement has been able to create theoretical models that present alternative structures so that radical feminism or structural feminist positions are understood in relation to liberal feminists, for example. But just because the models are known does not mean the representation is necessarily forthcoming."

— McGill student Soraya Hassanali, delegate at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.



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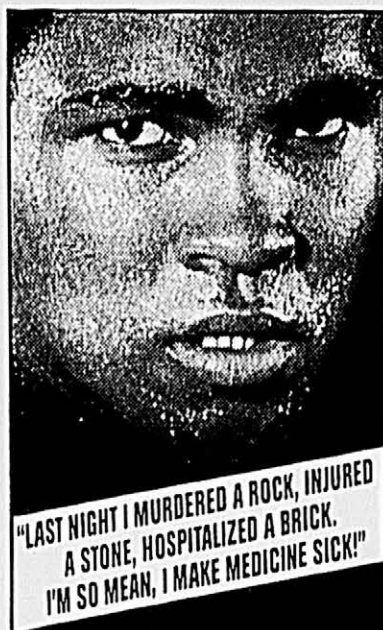
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A bloody outrage

Menstrual products
and women's bodies

by Melanie Fearon

If you are one of over eighty million menstruating women in North America please read on (and then claim your space to bitch). It is a fact that 60-70% of menstruating women use tampons during all or part of their menstrual cycle. It is also a fact that the average woman will use approximately 10 000 tampons or pads during her lifetime. Now girls, that's a lot of paper products. If you are a tampon user and you buy tampons that are sold at your local drugstore, you may decide to shop around a bit for an alternate choice. Let your cunt be clogged by something more respectful of your body.

By now it is well known that tampon use is associated with TSS (Toxic Shock Syndrome). TSS is caused by toxins produced by a bacterial agent known as Staphylococcus aureus, a bacteria of which all women have small amounts in their

bodies. The toxicity of this bacteria is controlled by levels of magnesium in the blood, but when magnesium levels are depleted, the bacteria flourish and become toxic. Tampons containing rayon, and other absorbency enhancers can disrupt the balance between magnesium and Staphylococcus aureus. This occurs as menstrual flow slows down, and these tampons continue to draw blood from the blood flow and surrounding tissues. Symptoms of TSS include diarrhea, fever, vomiting and peeling of the skin. The victim may also go into shock and if not immediately treated for her symptoms, may even die.

Other risks to women's health concern the use of tampon applicators. Tiny tampon fibers are known to break off the tampon and become embedded in the vaginal walls, inducing lesions and ulcerations which are potentially linked to cervical cancer. Vaginal lesions associated with tampon use are more likely to occur when tampon applicators (plastic or cardboard) are used. Vaginal ulcers may act as portals of entry for toxins into the bloodstream.

We can't forget that tampons and

pads are paper products, that paper products are produced by the pulp and paper industry and that North American pulp mills still use chlorine to whiten paper products. It should come as no surprise then, to learn that many commercial brand tampons and pads are bleached with chlorine, made with raw materials bleached with chlorine and contain rayon, a by-product of the chlorine industry (or other absorbency enhancers such as polyethylene). The health risks associated with chlorine are multifold. Chlorine can cause cancer in human beings. According to a study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, small quantities of chlorine damage both the immune and reproductive systems of humans and other organisms. Chlorine has also been linked to breast cancer.

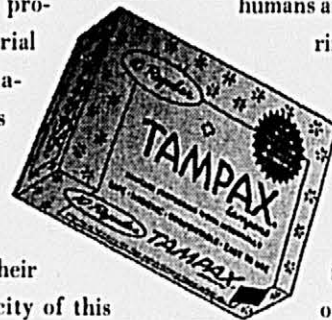
Women with breast cancer have between 50 to 60 per-cent higher levels of organochlorines in their breast tissue than other women. Currently one in eight North American women will get breast cancer.

Tampons may contain trace amounts of dioxin, a by-product of chlorine. Dioxin has toxicity levels comparable to plutonium.

So, as influential women with major consumer clout, we may ask ourselves, why must commercial brand tampons contain rayon? The answer to this question is that, well, in fact they don't. Rayon is simply an absorbency enhancer that is proven unnecessary by the very existence of 100 per-cent cotton, non-chlorine bleached

tampons such as Natracare and terra femme.

The term 'whitewash' has been coined not only to illustrate the chlorine bleaching process itself but is also used by activist groups to portray the whitewash of information surrounding the health and environmental risks associated with menstrual products. The 'whiter the better' ethic that industry promotes refers to the actual colouring of paper products themselves and



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Kidnapping the system

Women welfare recipients are being compromised

by Keri Kosuri

With welfare cutbacks threatening the country, women in particular are suffering the greatest consequences of an already inadequate system.

This fall, the provincial government announced the abolishment of the law that permits women with children under the age of six to receive welfare benefits even when not looking for work.

The new law states that once the child is two years old, he or she must be enrolled in a full-time daycare program. Supporters of the proposal argue that this way mothers of young children will not be deterred from searching for employment and joining the workforce.

But, in May 1996, all subsidies for upper primary school daycare programs were slashed. Meanwhile, the government will no longer pay the administrative costs of child care services. Welfare checks to parents of children in daycare

were also cut by 15 percent with the assumption that mothers will find work once their children are being taken care of.

This contradiction represents the no-win situation created by the severe cutbacks. Says Ken Wyman of the Anti-Poverty Organization, "More than 1/3 of welfare recipients are women, typically single mothers with children, yet with daycare space limited and unemployment still high, the women are expected to go out and find a non-existent job."

COMPROMISING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM?

Wyman also cites the August cuts to prescription drug insurance as contributing to the problem. Two years after Montreal's health care cutback of \$20

million, a mandate stated that welfare recipients would be required to pay a premium of \$50

every three months for Medication Insurance.

The insurance does not, however, cover the total costs of medications which in some cases may amount up to \$750 per year.

According to Gabriella Richman, co-ordinator of the Young Parents Program at Head and Hands, an organization committed to ending poverty, the consequence of this drug insurance law is that many mothers stop taking prescribed medications for problems such as asthma, diabetes and AIDS related diseases.

"If they take their medicine," argues Richman, "they will have no money

see the general pattern that people are getting less money while inflation is going up."

"If they take their medicine, they will have no money left for food. They are forced to choose between taking their medication and feeding their children."
— Gabriella Richman

In fact, since 1994, no new housing units have been erected in Québec, and the government has increased rents for public housing by 20 percent. A total of \$50 million has been saved in the reduction and elimination of a number of co-operatives and non-profit housing programs.

These cuts, in combination with the basic expenses of raising a child, leaves most women with insufficient means to provide a decent living environment for their families. Richman contends, "They don't have the resources to raise children in a proper apartment, let alone buy them books or even entertainment. What welfare really ignores is that they [mothers] are doing the most important work — raising the future generation."

DESERVING VS UNDESERVING: A FAIR DISTINCTION?

The government overlooks the responsibility of "raising the future generation" by placing the mothers in the category of "undeserving" poor. In 1990, the provincial Liberal government implemented the Paradis-Bourbeau reform. This reform bill classifies recipients in two categories: the undeserving and the deserving. The deserving are those who cannot work because of severe physical or mental handicaps.

Thus, the majority of recipients fall into the category of undeserving, including unemployed women with children.

Once mandated, women experienced a cutback of \$40 to \$100 per month. Says Wyman, "A high proportion of single mothers are poor and are on welfare... but there are no compensating increases in child care and with the checks still shrinking, many [women] are put off in a worse position today."

LIMITING CHOICES

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the welfare system infringes on the personal freedom of its participants. For example, Richman explains that recipients are restricted from studying part-time because they do not have the financial means. However, in order to obtain

loans and bursaries, candidates are required to be full-time students, something which many women cannot afford to do with a full-time job and children to raise.

The new law requires mothers between the ages of 18 and 24 to enroll in a vocational training course once the child turns two. However, if after completing one program she decides not to choose that profession, she is not allowed to enroll in a different course.

Their freedom is limited even in more personal matter. Says Richman, "If you choose a partner, there is the assumption that he will support you."

Thus, if a woman decides to move in with someone, she must endure further cuts to her welfare check.

After a certain grace period, women must inform their welfare agents that they are living with their partner. "The women feel very controlled by the system," says Richman, "and a lot of the times, they have to hide who they are with."

WOMEN TAKE ACTION

In reaction to this stringent and inadequate system, women have mobilized together in protest. The Québec Women's Federation will be demonstrating on Wednesday, March 12 at Le Bourse, in front of the Montréal stock exchange. Protesters hope that this location will call attention to the amount of money that government provides giant corporations with while further slashing social services for those struggling around the poverty line.

This December, Head and Hands submitted a letter to the Provincial Minister of Employment and Income Security, Louise Harel, voicing their concern against some of these

"More than 1/3 of welfare recipients are women, typically single mothers with children." — Ken Wyman, Anti-Poverty Organization

cuts. The letter disputes six main points of the new reformations and provides the government with suggestions for improving the situation of poverty stricken women.

The letter included six demands, among them the request that part-time training courses be made available, as most courses are currently a full time commitment. Also, the letter asks for increased access and availability to low-cost daycare and that young mothers should be allowed to choose any training programs they want. Finally, they request that the up to \$150 fines that mothers may be penalized for either not participating in the program or for not being able to find a job after they complete their training programs is ended.

Says Richman, "People think that they sit on their ass, watch TV, and have children one after another, but the truth is, no one wants to be on welfare, but the system doesn't allow them to go anywhere."



OVERLOOKED OFFENSES

Sexism in the Classroom Reveals its Many Forms

by Jessica Lim

Horror stories of sexual harassment confrontations are far from over, and coupled with a constant sexist atmosphere in many facets of the university community, sexism can seem hopelessly unbeatable.

As defined in the *Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook*, sexual harassment is "a display, by word or deed, or sexual attentions towards another individual or group of individuals of a nature which may reasonably be considered to be vexatious or abusive."

Sexual Assault Center of McGill Student's Society (SACOMSS) external coordinator Barbara Timmins describes the classroom tension created by sexism as a poisoned environment. "[A] poisoned environment is [one in which] there is sexual harassment going on and it's not [blatantly] sleep with me and you'll get an A," explains Timmins. "It's behaviour that creates a hostile environment in the class."

Furthermore, classroom sexism often occurs in settings where the class predominantly consists of men. Timmins gives the following example, "The professor will sometimes make jokes about women as a way of bonding with the men in the class."

McGill students have sought alternative ways to address the

"The onus lies not only on the professors to become more sensitive to this issue, but also on the student body to recognize sexist incidences, and to take recourse."

problem

since there are not yet laws constructed to punish subtle, but everyday types of sexism. McGill's philosophy department has created a Sub-Committee on the Participation of Women in the Classroom in response to a report written last year by female philosophy undergraduate students. The report outlines various reasons why women participate less in class than men, and offers suggestions on how to rectify this situation, which seems to evidence the pervasive devaluation of women's voices.

The analysis, written by Charlotte Kanya-Forstner, Sari Kisilevsky, Ramona Roberts,

Karen Spector, Tiffany Townsend, and Charlene Wiseman, explains that although "classroom dynamics are neither the sole nor the original cause of the problem... [it does] perpetuate the problem in concrete ways."

The paper contends that "the problem lies with the structure of the classroom dynamics, and not in individual women who are reluctant to speak, or in men who interrupt [women]". Therefore, the paper proposes suggestions for both students and professors on how to create a comfortable and respectable atmosphere within which both female and male students will feel at ease to participate.

The Committee consists of professors, graduate, and undergraduate students. The Sub-Committee is in the process of creating a set of suggestions on how to encourage women's participation in the classroom which they aim to present in April.

SEXIST SUBTLETIES

Another recent example of a professor's insensitivity regarding sexism in the classroom occurred in the course: Introduction to Film As A Mass Medium. During one particular class, the professor showed the film *Mata-dor* without previously informing the students of the

movie's

content.

The opening scene was of a man masturbating while watching women being decapitated. The individual who reported the incident was offended by the material shown, and stated that many students reacted with horror. This could have been avoided if students had been given the opportunity to refuse viewing the movie in advance or if the professor had opened up prior discussion concerning the sexist and violent ramifications of a scene such as this for viewers, especially women viewers.

Timmins believes that situations

similar to the one in the Introduction to Film as A Mass Medium are common, and should be addressed as problematic. However, Timmins emphasizes that she is not promoting censorship of class material. "I'm certainly not advocating censorship," says Timmins. "I just think that showing material that is pornographic requires sensitivity. Professors should warn students prior to showing

[the

"Sexual Harassment policies at McGill are currently up for revision, and are for the most part viewed as outdated and ineffective, even compared to other universities."

pornographic material]

so students who find it degrading don't have to stay."

Non-gender neutral language is also an example of university-wide and classroom sexism which occurs frequently, yet is often dismissed as unimportant. As a result, the American Philosophical Association created a report outlining why "the generic use of 'man' and 'he'...commonly considered gender-neutral" is problematic and exclusive, and suggests how to avoid the use of non-gender neutral language.

The report, entitled *Guidelines For The Nonsexist Use Of Language*, states that using "the generic 'man' leaves out more than women, it often leads us to omit the distinctive elements of female experience and behavior". The report offers various nonsexist alternatives and sights pragmatic examples of how to incorporate nonsexist language into a lecture.

SEXISM IN THE CURRICULUM

To counter the under representation of women in the curriculum, organizations such as the Simone De Beauvoir Institute have been formed. The Institute's aim is "to promote a better understanding of the historical and contemporary situation of women in society".

Director of the Simone De Beauvoir Institute Kaarina Kailo describes the Institute's position as providing a balance to the regular university educa-

tion. "We help women build all different aspects of surviving in the world, and universities can't afford to be just skills," asserts Kailo. "You have to have vision."

Unfortunately, the future of the distinguished Institute is uncertain. As result of the budget cuts at Concordia University the Simone De Beauvoir Institute was recommended for closure. It is situations such as these,

of

the closure of a

well reputed women-centred academic organization, that is reflexive of the continuity of sexism in university communities, within the classroom and in the curriculum.

Despite minor measures taken to recognize and contend with the long ignored problematics of sexism in the university environment,

there are still multiple impasses to be overcome. These include deeply entrenched personal/cultural biases and the willingness of individuals to dismiss the validity of sexist offenses and exclusions.

The onus lies not only on the professors to become more sensitive to this issue, but also on the student body to recognize sexist incidences including the continued use of exclusive language, and to take recourse.

RECOURSE

Byond more subtle forms of sexism at McGill, a void remains with respect to strident sexual harassment policies and protections. Currently, sexual harassment complaints are either informally or formally resolved at McGill. In an informally resolved case the complainant speaks to an assessor who then decides on proper recourse. According to the formal procedures, a student can approach the professor by herself/himself or in a group, or work through an assessor. In the latter case, the complainant must agree to be identified for the assessor to obtain authorization for an inves-

tigation to take place.

Support and information is also available through SACOMSS. "An accompaniment team was formed last year," explains Timmins. "The team consists of women who are trained in crisis intervention and [who] also have extra training in McGill policies in sexual assault and sexual harassment."

However, the accompaniment team is non-directional. "The team is there to assist the student who is going forward with a complaint," explains Timmins. "They will explain options, explain rights, help write letters, go to meetings with the professors with them, and help them assess the situation."

NEW POLICIES IN SIGHT?

Sexual Harassment policies at McGill are currently up for revision, and are for the most part viewed as outdated and ineffective, even compared to other universities.

"There's a widespread belief that McGill's policy is inadequate," says Timmins. "Revisions have dragged on for years [and] there's no consensus."

Following criteria unknown to the student body, the principal appoints professors as assessors who are not necessarily qualified, and who receive no training. As a result of this attitude, assessors of sexual harassment complaints often seem unapproachable to students.

"Sexual harassment is an issue that requires sensitivity," says Timmins. "In some cases it's clear that there are [assessors] who are not suited for their position, and our calls reflect that."

Information on the 'Regulations Concerning Complaints of Sexual Harassment' is found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

Sexual Assault Centre of McGill Student's Society (SACOMSS): 398-2700

Sexual Harassment Assessors:
Professor Robert Lecker: 398-6562
Professor Katrina Stewart: 398-7872

Professor Sharon Bezeau: 398-3384

Professor Pat Wells: 398-4508

Might Makes Right?

Pro-feminists, drum-beaters, and threatened misogynists gone mad

by Hannah Rogers

The men's movement ranges from pro-feminist groups to organizations which actively combat feminist causes. The movement is diverse, and the men's rights movement particularly is indicative of an era in which roles for women and men are in flux.

Most people's perception of the men's movement is a bunch of men beating drums in the forest, getting in touch with their "lost masculinity." Robert Bly, poet, and unofficial leader of the "mythopoetic" group of the men's movement has popularized this approach of getting back to one's masculinity and understanding the warrior, the king, and the hunter in each man. They rely upon mythopoetry and masculine endeavors such as beating drums and slaying deer. Their essentialist views reinforce stereotypes of men as being fierce and aggressive.

Others groups promote a pro-feminist and anti-violence stance, and work closely with women's groups. The Men's Network for Change, a Canadian organization "committed to working against sexism and patriarchy in Canadian Society" is an example. They work towards reproductive rights for women and fight homophobia. Groups such as the MNC have little in common with most other segments of the men's movement.

Some organizations are affiliated with evangelical Christianity, most notably, "Promise Keepers," founded by former football coach, Bill McCartney. Promise Keepers requires its members to make "promises" to maintain their relationships with Jesus, family, friends, church, and community. The organization effectively excludes anyone who is not an evangelical Christian heterosexual married man. Promise Keepers is not politically affiliated but shares many views with conservative political organizations and parties.

More radical men's rights movements exist outside of obscure organizations. Many of their ideas are espoused by mainstream political parties. Canadian Senator Anne Cools, a Lib-

eral who has been called a men's rights advocate, recently stopped a bill that would have made child support payments tax deductible for the custodial parent, but not for the parent paying the child support, claiming that it was discriminatory towards men. Furthermore, on March 28, 1995, she spoke to the Canadian Senate about the correlation between

of the United States, and that the judicial system is manipulated by feminists. They claim that the courts are biased against men when awarding custody and ordering child support payments. The MDA claims that "judicial anti-male prejudice" governs divorce.

Likewise, the organization, Dads Against Discrimination (DADS)

and its prime purposes are "to establish a lesbian-socialist republic and to dismantle the family unit". More disturbing, is the statement that "[b]attered women's shelters are also funded, despite the absence of justification. These establishments serve as headquarters or covens of feminoids primarily to pursue their own agendas and only secondarily to help these alleged victims."

With respect to the MDA's 'critique' of feminism, any autonomous woman is irrational and dangerous. Furthermore, with the loss of 'femininity' she becomes a dehumanized "feminoid". Lesbians, who stray even further from their conceptions of what it means to be a 'woman' are seen as a threat, usurpers of male position and as can be seen with the use of the word "covens," are likened to witches. Even more disturbing, to the MDA, women's shelters exist without justification.

While the MDA denies that men abuse women, it simultaneously glorifies aggression as a male virtue. According to the MDA, "men's natural characteristics" include "aggression and greater motivation [than women]."

For Walter Farrell, author of *Why Men are the Way they Are*, and supporter of the NCFM, masculinity should be embraced as healthy, fulfilling and constructive. Masculine values, he claims, are, "generosity, fairness, nurturing, fathering through coaching, leadership, outrageousness, keeping emotions under control."

"pledges to preserve, protect, and defend the father headed family, and to pass the history of fatherhood to subsequent generations." They provide a number of services to men who are involved in divorce and custody hearings that promote the concept that men should have at least equal custody, and dismiss 'deadbeat dads' (dads who default on their child support payments) as non-existent.

This sense of oppression is symptomatic of many men's rights groups and is indicative of a sense of powerlessness as women continue to make progress in areas from which they have previously been excluded. This backlash manifests itself in many facets of North American society and has become one that ranges from the dismissal of women's issues as 'politically correct' to the vocal complaints of 'threatened men'. It encompasses accusations that date rape does not exist, the issue of reproductive rights and the recent rise in attacks on abortion clinics.

MORE FEMINIST BASHING

Men's rights groups, like the MDA view feminism as "irra-



male children abused by their mothers and men who grow up and become violent criminals. Maintaining that women abuse children as frequently as men do, she shifts the blame from the violent male criminals to the abusive mothers. While certainly not as radical as some men in the men's rights movement, Senator Cools has continually upheld the notion that men are discriminated against in Canadian society.

OPPRESSED MEN SING THE BLUES

More radical men's rights groups such as The Men's Defense Association (MDA) and the National Coalition of Free Men (NCFM), complain that the entire system of government is discriminatory against men, and that society in general has "emasculated" men. "The male of the species", claims Richard F. Doyle of the MDA "is under increasing attack legally, politically, economically, and culturally, causing many to become confused, helpless, and oppressed."

Men's rights advocates claim that women own a great deal of the assets

'Men', however, is a narrow term for many involved in the men's rights movement. The MDA excludes many men from its definition: "True men and manhood...does not necessarily imply the deer slayer type...[and] definitely exclude[s] homosexuals."

Promise Keepers is actively homophobic, and while it does not explicitly exclude homosexuals from its membership, it regards homosexuality as inhibiting the role of men in society. They have published articles in their magazine, *New Man*, that claim that homosexuality is a disorder that can be cured through counseling and behaviour modification.. The MDA ridicules the mythopoetic men's movement as, "made up of disillusioned feminists, masochists, homosexuals, and other lost souls seeking salvation in male bonding, drumming, etc." The animosity between factions of the men's movement indicates the lack of cohesion within the movement.

The men's rights movement is testimony to the fact that women have made progress. The men's rights movement is defensive, threatened, and confused. Many men have welcomed the changes that have occurred since the second wave of the women's movement, but with any social change, backlash seems inevitable.

It is easy to dismiss men's rights groups as radical fringe, but many of their ideas are visible in contemporary political and social discourse. While the fears of reactionary men's rights groups are indicative of positive social change, women should never assume that our gains are permanent. Women have to continue to work and fight not only to maintain what we have accomplished, but to create a safer, more just, further evolved society.

A BLOODY OUTRAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

to myths about the uncleanness of women's bodies. You may not love having your period, but there is no reason to feel that your own menstrual blood is a taboo subject, sight or scent.

Besides, non-chlorine bleached tampons, there are other so-called 'feminine hygiene' products available that are reusable, proving to be both more affordable and environmentally friendly. One of these options is a cylindrical rubber cup known as "The

Keeper". Other alternatives are sea sponges, a sponge with a string attached for insertion and removal, and reusable, washable pads, made by small businesses and many independent women in Montréal.

Stroke it, pet it, tease it but please don't pollute the pussy.

You can buy these products or obtain information regarding their distribution at the Women's Union and QPIRG McGill.

O's empowerment

HERSTREET 24-HOURS

A DAY? *Montréal women's centre holds benefit to expand its safe-space*

by Jameela Jeeroburkhan

Lioné Couture dreads 6pm. As founder and director of Herstreet Montréal (La Rue des Femmes de Montréal), a day-centre for homeless women and women in difficulties, 6pm means closing up and sending women away for the night.

But Herstreet wants to extend those hours. On Saturday, February 22, Herstreet held a benefit show at the Strathern Centre to aid its development into a full-time shelter.

Inspired by Street City women's centre in Toronto, Herstreet has been a day-centre since 1994. It provides food, clothing, medical and other information to women in difficulties. It also conducts activities such as mural-painting and mask-making, but women are not obliged to participate.

"The centre respects how women feel like living," explains Jeanne Francke, finance committee member and benefit organizer. "There are individual intervention and material goods provided, but more importantly, there is a supportive milieu for these women."

With 15 years experience in volunteer work - mainly with women in the Movement Against Rape and Incest - Couture founded Herstreet to offer alternatives to women.

"[Herstreet] came from the realization that there are not a lot of resources for women, especially non-psychiatric resources," says Couture.

She also criticizes the psychiatric treatment of homeless and troubled women saying, "There are three times as many women undergoing psychiatric therapy [as there are men]." But Couture feels this therapy is not adapted to women's needs and is very expensive for the poor.

"Women are often blamed for their problems without weighing the importance of their past difficulties and their treatment by society," Couture remarks. "So I decided to set up a centre that would give these women power and a place in society."

The number of women frequenting the centre varies, but

15 is the daily maximum. Often, the women are homeless or are survivors of incest and other forms of violence.

"Homeless women don't necessarily sleep on the streets," explains Francke. "They may move from house to house, but have no shelter of their own."

Caroline, who has been visiting Herstreet for about two months says, "Sometimes the end of the month is hard." Right now, she is looking for work and she hopes to return to CEGEP for a diploma in administration. For Caroline, the centre allows her to eat her meals in good company.

"Sad things take place in the home," Couture explains while speaking to an

maraderie between the people who volunteer at Herstreet and those who use it.

According to Francke and other Herstreet staff, many women's organizations set down rules that users are forced to abide by. But Herstreet tries to function on a more egalitarian basis.

"Here, each woman's voice has weight," states Francke. "[Volunteers] must listen to women's problems and be considerate."

Herstreet has four what Couture calls "paid volunteers," described as such because, according to Couture, the work they do far outweighs their remuneration. There are about fifteen additional volunteers, nine of whom work directly with the women.

Anglophones comprise a third of the women who use the centre and Herstreet promotes itself as bilingual.

Walsh decided to work at Herstreet because "it's collective and feminist." She finds Herstreet's philosophy to be more open-minded than most centres. "It's non-racist, non-homophobic and very much based on respect," she

explains.

Herstreet has various projects in mind based on its respect for the specific needs of each woman. In discussion is a work program designed to re-integrate poor and homeless women into the work force at their own pace.

As well, Herstreet would like to establish a Participants' Committee that would allow the users of the centre to voice demands to the staff and engage them in the decision making process.

But right now, such programs are still waiting to take root. "We're developing them according to the means and possibilities of the women," says Couture.

The benefit show raised about three thousand dollars and nearly all tickets were sold. But Herstreet is far from reaching the amount needed to become a full-time residence. Right now, Herstreet is only open on weekends from 11am to 6pm. Couture estimates a required \$200,000 for a new building and, at least, \$25,000 for basic materials.

"We're doing a lot of fund raising," sighs Couture.



A COMMUNITY AMONG FRIENDS

almost full hall at the benefit. "70% of aggression takes place in the home, so home becomes a symbol of horror," she says.

Hosted by Québec's Queen of Improv Diane Jules, the benefit included mostly female musicians like Penny Lang and Terez Montcalm. None of the performers were paid, so all funds went directly to Herstreet.

Outside the main hall, food and drinks were sold while volunteers and centre users watched the event on television screens. Since there were 140 seats in the hall and about 40 volunteers, the television set-up allowed those who could not afford a \$25 ticket to experience the show in a relaxed environment among friends.

"Some women are inside, but most of them want to stay out here with the volunteers," says Gen Walsh, a volunteer since last summer.

Sitting together at tables and sharing food and drinks, there is a sense of ca-



STOP USING ME

by Hannah Rogers

I hate SSMU elections. I hate being treated as the "lesbian", the "woman" the "activist" the "alternative lifestyle-liver" the "marginal" the "freak". I am not the only lesbian, woman or activist at McGill. I've been schmoozed, smiled at, flattered, and sucked up to more in the last two weeks than ever before. By singling me out as this incredibly important, influential and illustrious person on campus, you have effectively ignored

everyone else. You have also turned "us" (whoever us is) into a homogenous, herd-like group of people who will follow the leader no matter what she/he says.

And the sad thing is, after this whole frenzy ends, when the ballots are counted, I can bet you quite a bit of money that I won't hear from these people again . . . until campaigning begins again, next year.

"GIRLS JUST AREN'T FUNNY"

by Amy Lang

When a boy I know explained to me that "girls just aren't funny", I suddenly understood why I was the only woman in McGill Improv. Aha! I thought, humour is a biologically inherent characteristic which is somehow attached (along with the DNA codes for chest hair and math skills) to that Y chromosome I lack. "It all makes sense now," I cried (in my head). Those situations on-stage where I couldn't contribute to the phallus jokes weren't just because my miming skills are bad. Apparently, you have to own a penis to mime one.

This was wonderful news for me, as I've spent a year alternating between repressed fury at the blatant misogyny on-stage or in the audience, and the belief that I was nothing more than a completely skill-less boob (in this case, literally). Now, with this amazing realization, I could just accept my job as "the girl" or the inanimate object in our scenes (actually the two often go together). I could stop worrying about why my girlfriends refused to come to our improv workshops. It's because they were dull, humourless and unintelligent, not because the aggressively male and extroverted humour environment we'd set up was discouraging. (You can relax, boys — those breast jokes

had nothing to do with it!).

With that one brief, illuminating insight my previous theory about how girls just aren't encouraged to be the class clown or loud or obnoxious or risk-takers evaporated. My sub-theory that many audience members are assholes who only like penis jokes was, in fact, confirmed. Obviously though, this was the "natural" order, not to be tampered with, and I should stop my futile attempts to change it. Now that I know that I'm not funny, I can stop my annoying habit of inadvertently making people laugh! I can stop trying to recruit the masses of hilarious (or so I'd mistakenly thought) women I know into McGill Improv or any other type of comedic activity! I can stop using my peculiarly feminine talents ("the power of the vagina" comes to mind) to save superheroes in our scenes! I can finally give up my misconceptions of exhilaration, subversion and power!

This is a great relief. For a minute there I thought I'd actually changed something.

Note: anyone who wishes to share her absence of humour and/or her complete lack of comedic skill should contact me at 937-7469 or bp32@musicb.mcgill.ca



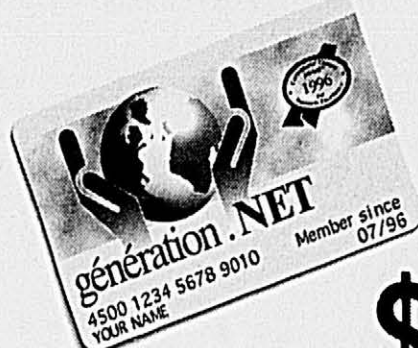
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DR. JEAN LOISELLE B.Sc. dds
GENERAL DENTIST
FULL SERVICE DENTISTRY
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PGSS ELECTIONS 1997

UNCONTESTED CANDIDATES

President

and

**Board of Governors
Representative**

(photo not available)

SAAD KHAN

An MBA student, I am PGSS Senator, PGSS Council-member and member of University-Affairs-Committee and Academic-Issues-Committee.

Main goals :

- Ensuring student representation, awareness of privatization • Opposing tuition fee increases • Greater job opportunities and funding by industrial partnership • Address AGSEM issues.

Vote Saad Khan for your PGSS President / Board of Governors representative.

VP University Affairs



ANNA KRUYNSKI

V.P. University Affairs 1996-97.

Accomplishments this year: Future Visions Conference, Ph.D. Comprehensive Policy, and increased representation on campus.

On-going projects: supervisor evaluation procedure, policy for supervisor loss, and Alternative McGill Budget. Goals for 97-98: complete on-going projects, increase transparency of the University decision-making process and increase communication with McGill administration.

VP External Affairs

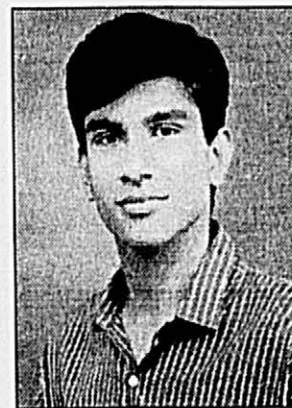


ERIN RUNIONS,

Ph.D. 4, Religious Studies

As VP-External (incumbent), I have consistently spoken out against the threats to publicly funded, accessible, high quality education, on local, provincial, and federal levels. I will continue to provide students with ways (from letter writing to demonstrations) to fight the cuts, and to make their voices heard. Working together can make a difference. Vote Erin Runions, VP-External Affairs.

VP Finance



MANSOOR HAIDER JAWAID

I have a quantitative educational background and am presently studying Finance. My experience in handling Business Development and Finance provides me the right mix of skills that the PGSS needs. My intention is to provide representation and services to the members as well as a good financial management to the PGSS. I believe that the best option for PGSS is to increase its revenues through aggressive marketing to bring members back.

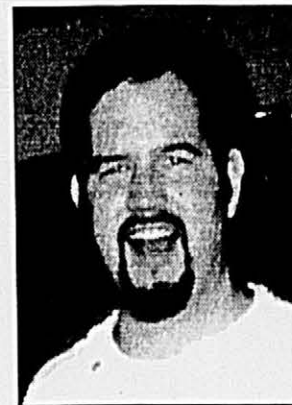
VP Internal Affairs



GREG MAGAS

As my primary responsibility in the coming year relates to student activities, I propose to organize events at Thomson House that better correspond to the wishes of the PGSS membership. As well, I intend to promote awareness of Thomson House among graduate students. I feel that we are privileged to have access to this great facility and I would like to see an increase in the number of people enjoying it.

Senator (Ph.D.)

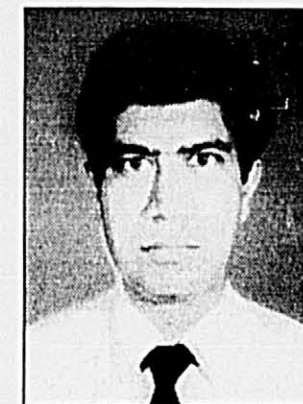


NEIL ROONEY,

Ph.D. 3

Qualifications: Ph.D. representative to Senate ('96-'97), PGSS Academic Issues Committee, McGill Nominating Committee, McGill Selection Committee for Associate Vice-Principal (Graduate Studies), Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Conflict of Interest Policy. I believe continuity on Senate will remind the University that graduate students are a constant and indispensable component of the

VP Administration



ALOK KHATRI

If elected I wish to undertake the following:

1. to develop a more user friendly and interactive web site for PGSS, utilizing my electrical engineering background and knowledge of HTML programming.
2. to improve communication between the Executive committee and PGSS members so as to get more member involvement.
3. to gain visibility for decisions taken by the PGSS and member involvement for the same.
4. to improve the overall communications between PGSS and its members.

Senator (Masters)



JACK YUJA

Dear Graduate Students,

As your next representative to the McGill Senate 1997/1998, rest assured that we have a strong voice in this administrative body which deals with important *Academic Issues* such as tuition, fellowships, grants, and the global academic regulations of the University. Therefore, **Vote JACK YUJA for Senate!**